

Message Text

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62

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 NIC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 SAJ-01 IO-14 ACDA-19 SAM-01 DRC-01 /148 W

----- 078728

R 081519Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8610

INFO CINCPAC

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CH, UR

SUBJ: PRESS BUILDS SYMPATHY FOR DETAINED

HELICOPTER CREW

REF: MOSCOW 6400

1. SUMMARY: CAMPAIGN TO GENERATE PUBLIC INDIGNATION
OVER CONTINUED CHINESE DETENTION OF SOVIET
HELICOPTER CREW (SEE REFTEL) IS GIVEN NEW BOOST IN
TWO MAY 8 LITERARY GAZETTE FEATURES. MEANWHILE, CHINESE
HAVE REPORTEDLY REBUFFED LATEST SOVIET DEMARCHE. END SUMMARY.

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2. ONE STORY DETAILS ILL-FATED FLIGHT THROUGH

INTERVIEWS OF PERSONNEL INVOLVED AND QUOTES TAPES OF RADIO CONVERSATIONS JUST BEFORE HELICOPTER LANDED. SECOND FEATURE REVEALS THAT AIRCRAFT COMMANDER KURBATOV HAS AN INFANT DAUGHTER BORN SHORTLY AFTER HIS FORCED LANDING. FEATURES ARE ILLUSTRATED WITH PHOTOS OF KURBATOV BEFORE CAPTURE AND HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN AWAITING HIS RETURN.

3. FEATURES OCCUPY NEARLY AN ENTIRE PAGE AND ARE HEADED BY BOLD-FACE BOX OUTLINING DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO SECURE RELEASE OF CREW, INCLUDING WARNING TO CHINESE THAT THEY WILL BEAR FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR "INEVITABLE CONSEQUENCES" IF CREW NOT RELEASED. FEATURE ON THE FLIGHT SAYS SOVIET PEOPLE CANNOT FAIL TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT FATE OF CREW, ASKING RHETORICALLY WHAT FARCE CHINESE HAVE IN STORE FOR THEM. FEATURE ON KURBATOV'S WIFE APPLAUDS HER CONFIDENCE THAT HE WILL RETURN, AND THE AUTHOR CONCLUDES WITH FERVENT DECLARATION: "THE MOTHERLAND IS FIGHTING (BORYETSYA) FOR YOU, MEN. WE'RE WITH YOU. HAVE COURAGE."

4. LITGAZ ADDS A SCRAP OF INFORMATION TO WHAT WAS PREVIOUSLY KNOWN ABOUT THE FLIGHT. ACCORDING TO OFFICER INTERVIEWED ON KURBATOV'S BASE, THE HELICOPTER WAS SCHEDULED FOR A REGULAR BORDER PATROL FLIGHT BUT THIS MISSION WAS CANCELLED WHEN MERCY MISSION AROSE. LITGAZ ALSO DISCLOSES FATE OF SOLDIER WHO WAS TO BE EVACUATED -- HE WAS LATER PICKED UP BY CIVILIAN AMBULANCE PLANE AND TAKEN TO HOSPITAL, BUT DOCTORS REPORTED "UNFORTUNATELY, HELP CAME TOO LATE."

5. ON DIPLOMATIC FRONT, WE NOTE THAT UZVESTIA MAY 5

REPORTS THAT AMBASSADOR TOLSTIKOV ON MAY 4 DELIVERED STATEMENT TO MFA IN PEKING WHICH MADE SAME POINTS AS ILICHEV MAY 2 DEMARCHE IN MOSCOW AND ADDED DEMAND THAT SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICIALS BE GRANTED ACCESS TO DETAINED CREWMEN. GERMAN DIPLOMAT HERE WAS TOLD BY CHINESE COLLEAGUE THAT PRC MFA SUBSEQUENTLY CALLED IN TOLSTIKOV AND INFORMED HIM THAT CREWMEN WOULD BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DEALT WITH ACCORDING TO CHINESE LAW. ITALIAN SOURCE BELIEVES CHINESE AMBASSADOR DELIVERED SIMILAR RESPONSE IN MOSCOW. STOESEL

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